# S A N A T A N

***Pratnakirttimapavrinu***
(Let us attempt to unravel the glorious past – *Rigveda*)

***Editor***
**Dr Alok Tripathi**

**Issue 20** **28.02.2009** **Year 2. No. 4**

Surya of Pala period, Seattle Art Museum, USA
(source: Anamika Pathak, Feb. 2009)

**S**outh **A**sian **N**etwork of **A**rcheologists/academicians for **T**echnical and **A**rtistic **N**urturing

*"The world is round and the place which may seem like the end may also be the beginning."*

*- Ivy Baker*

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## EDITORIAL

*Dear Colleagues*

*Development makes us think differently and all such opinions deserve due consideration before arriving at any decision. Intolerance or tendency of ignoring what does not suits one is also growing. Many publications we come across give valuable information or scholarly views but hardly have any space for others views on the same issue. Sanatan has been the forum where we try to put all aspects and varied views to learned readers giving them a choice to analyse and come to a decision of their own. This issue contains information on Asokan inscription. High-resolution images are also included so that epigraphist can examine it and we would appreciate if they share their opinion with other members.*

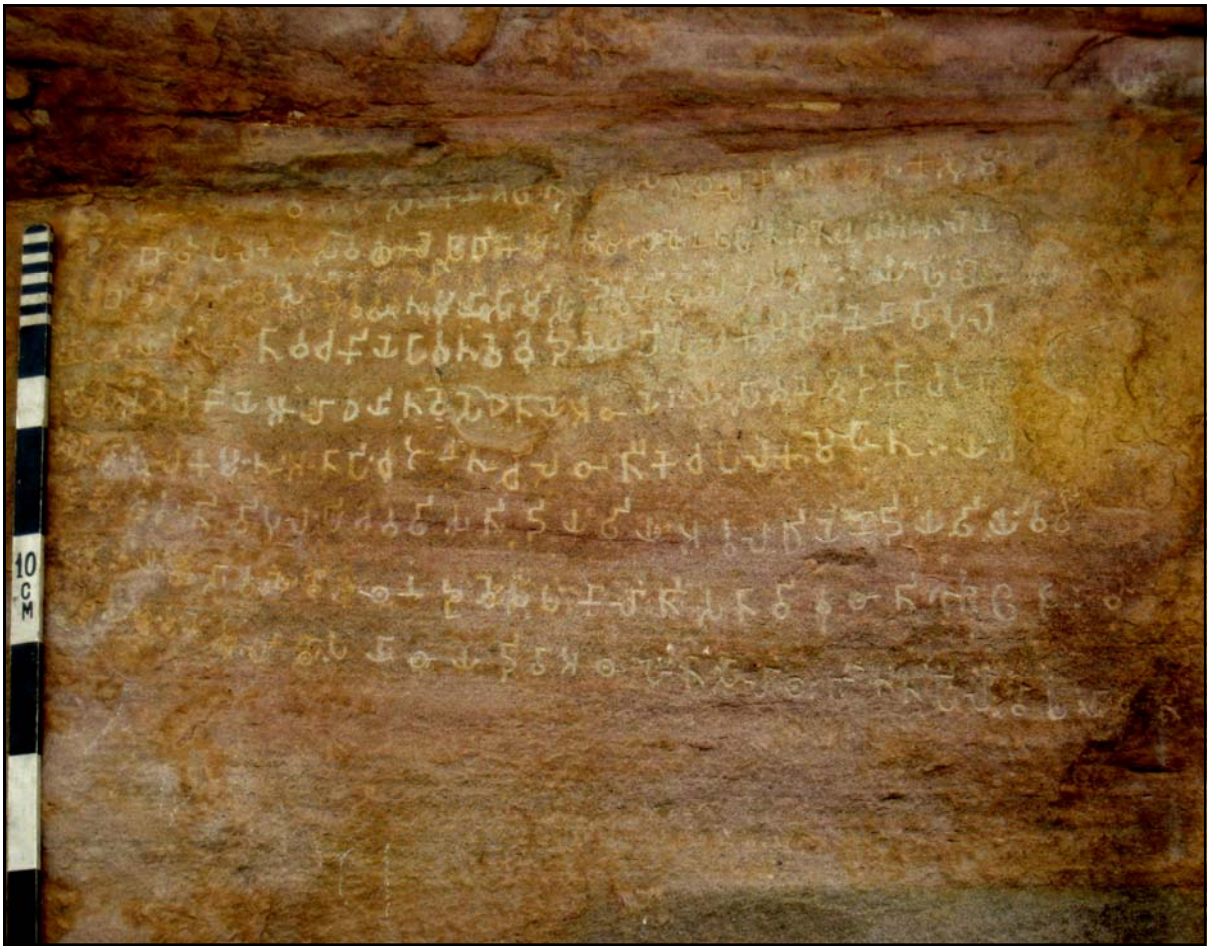
*A member visiting USA has sent images of Indian collections in American museum. She wish to share what she saw and most of us cannot. Wouldn't it be wonderful if every member make all other members to also see through their eyes. Think of the day when every member looks at things with thousand eyes.*

*Editor*

**RESEARCHES**

# Recently Discovered Rock Edict in Asokan Brahmi at Basaha, District Kaimur, Bihar

A good amount of archaeologically important material including an inscription in Asokan Brahmi has come to light as a consequence of a sustained field investigation carried out as a Ph. D. programme under the supervision of Prof. Vibha Tripathi in the Department of AIHC and Archaeology, Banaras Hindu University (BHU). Extensive explorations were conducted between the years 2005 and 2008 in Chandauli district, Uttar Pradesh. The researcher Om Prakash Kumar has been exploring various rock-shelters and archaeological sites in the hilly range southeast of Varanasi. The area around the district of Chandauli is rich in archaeological remains from Paleolithic period to the Colonial period.




Asokan Brahmi “Basaha Inscription” (source : Vibha Tripathi et al., 9.11.2008)

Valuable archaeological remains in the form of dilapidated temples, forts, megalithic burials, ancient mounds, rock-shelters with and without paintings, etc. are scattered in Chandauli district and adjacent Uttar Pradesh – Bihar bordering areas. Some of the important discoveries made by the team of the Department of AIHC and Archaeology, Banaras Hindu University have already been reported earlier (*Sanatan* 10: 4). In another issue (*Sanatan* 12: 4-8) we also mentioned about the presence of an inscription in Brahmi which we had been studying from the last week of October 2008.

To share our knowledge with learned scholars of the subject a joint paper reporting these findings was presented at the conference of Indian Archaeological Society held on 29-31 December 2008 at Bhubaneswar. In our illustrated paper the Asokan Brahmi inscription was reported as the "Basaha Inscription". While presenting the paper we raised some doubts regarding the genuineness of the inscription.

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घुरहूपुर में मिलीं अशोकन लिपि में लिखीं पांच पंक्तियां

हिन्दुस्तान संवाद इलिया

घुरहूपुर पहाड़ी की एक अन्य गुफा में पत्थरों पर खुदाई कर किसी प्राचीन लिपि में पांच पंक्तियां लिखी मिली हैं। बीएचयू के पुरातत्व शोध छात्र ओमप्रकाश ने इस लिपि का नाम अशोकन लिपि बताया है। उन्होंने कहा कि शीघ्र ही इसे तक्षशिला से आये विद्वान सीताराम दूबे पढ़ेंगे।

भगवान बुद्ध के शैल चित्र वाली गुफा से सौ मीटर दूर उसी पहाड़ी की दूसरी गुफा में खुदाई करके अशोकन लिपि में पांच पंक्तियां लिखी पायी गयी हैं। इसे पढ़ने के बाद ही इस क्षेत्र में तमाम रहस्यों पर से पर्दा उठ सकेगा। ओमप्रकाश ने बताया कि यह अशोकन लिपि खरोष्ठी लिपि के बाद की है। इसमें अक्षर उल्टे लिखे जाते हैं। इसमें क्या लिखा है, इसे लिपि वेत्ता ही पढ़कर बता सकते हैं। संयोग है कि इस समय बीएचयू में तक्षशिला विवि से लिपि वेत्ता सीताराम दूबे आये हैं।

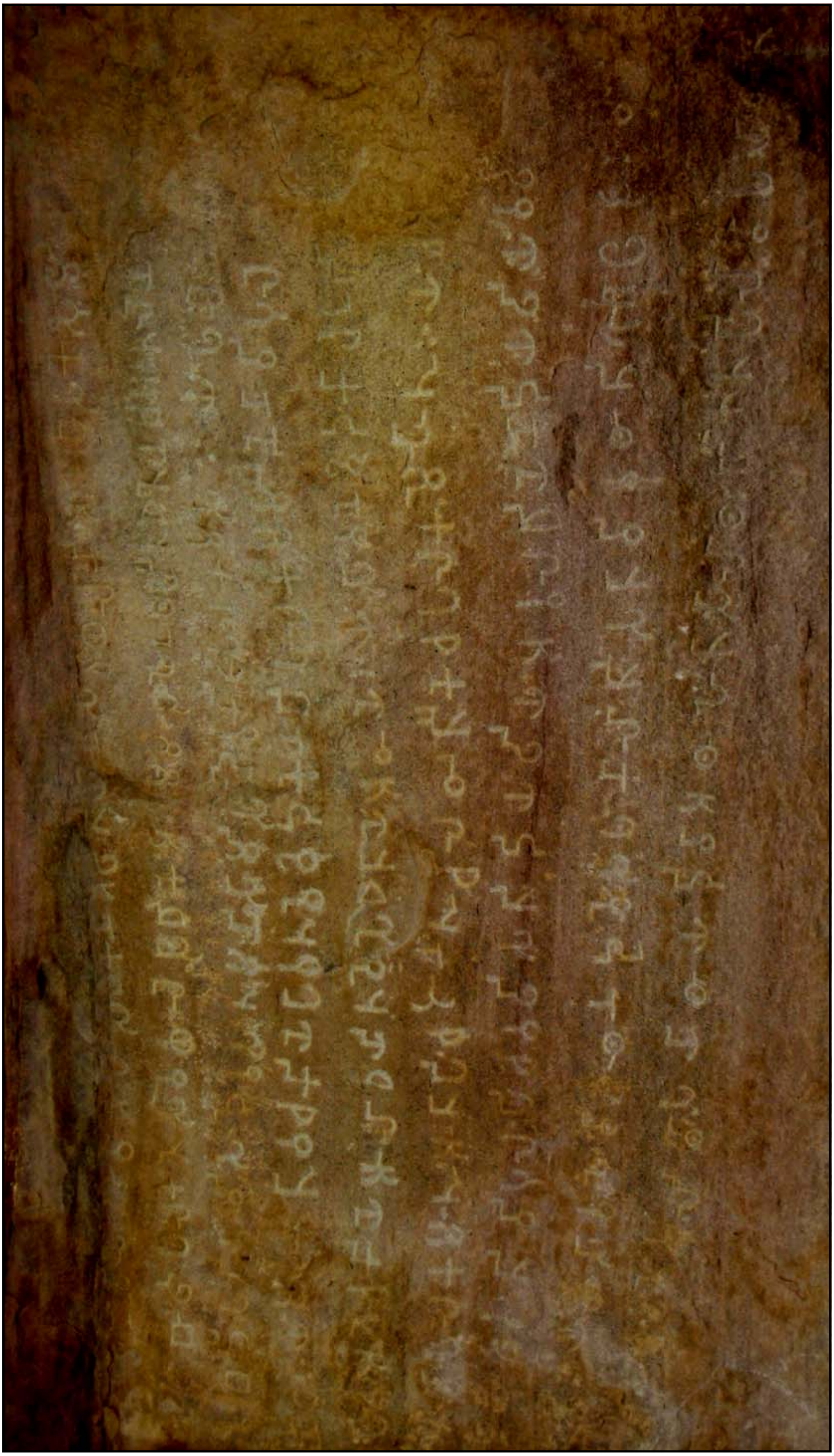
घुरहूपुर पहाड़ी की गुफा में खुदाई कर लिखी गयी पंक्तियां

The village of Ghurhupur in Chandauli has been in the lime light in recent days because of its rich archaeological remains. After our exploration in Ghurhupur in May 2008, there was extensive coverage of these paintings by the media. Number of rock-shelters and paintings especially the one depicting Buddha seated in *Vitarka Mudra* has caught attention of people. In course of these hectic movements a tragedy, death of a reputed journalist of *Hindustan*, Sushil Tripathi, also took place. He had also published these paintings in local issue of daily *Hindustan* on 4th October. Since then local press is providing good coverage to these findings. It draws huge crowds of spectators as well. The villagers were so enthusiastic that they have explored the hill many times for

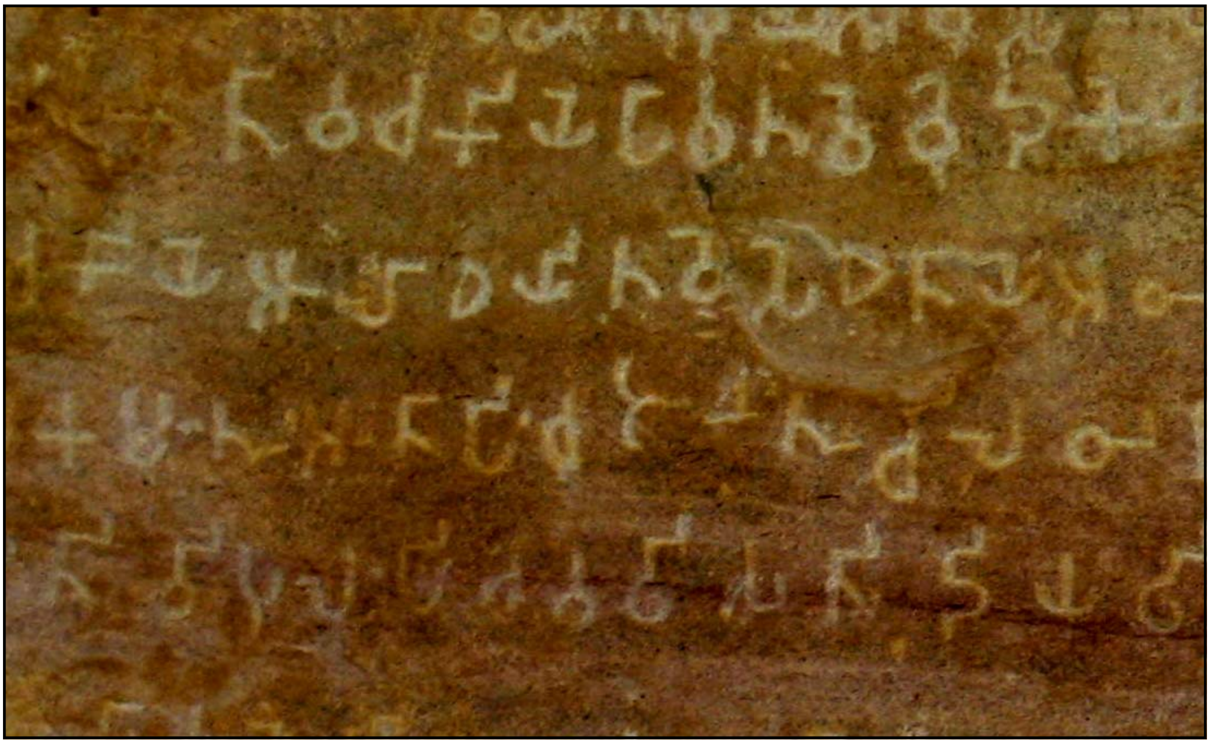
"Basaha Inscription" (source : Vibha Tripathi et al., 2008)

getting more paintings and inscriptions for us. On every new finding we have been informed by the villagers. In course of this exercise we carefully surveyed all the rock-shelters of that hill. No inscription except the first one in Kusana Brahmi in Ghurhupur (which we found in May 2008) could be noticed near any rock-shelter of the hill till the mid of October 2008. Within a few days of reporting of this painting by Sushil Tripathi, Buddhist monks arrived on the scene and even started offering oblations there. They organized *Buddha Mahotsava* on 2nd November 2008 to highlight this area. Meanwhile in the last week of October this so called Asokan Rock Edict came to light. We again visited the place on 31 October 2008 and reported it to a local Hindi paper. Prof. Sita Ram Dubey of Department of AIHC and Archaeology, BHU has deciphered the text and pointed out its similarity with Sasaram Rock Edict of Asoka. It seems that to firmly associate this place with Buddha someone has engraved the inscription in Basaha in the late October just before the *Buddha Mahotsava*.

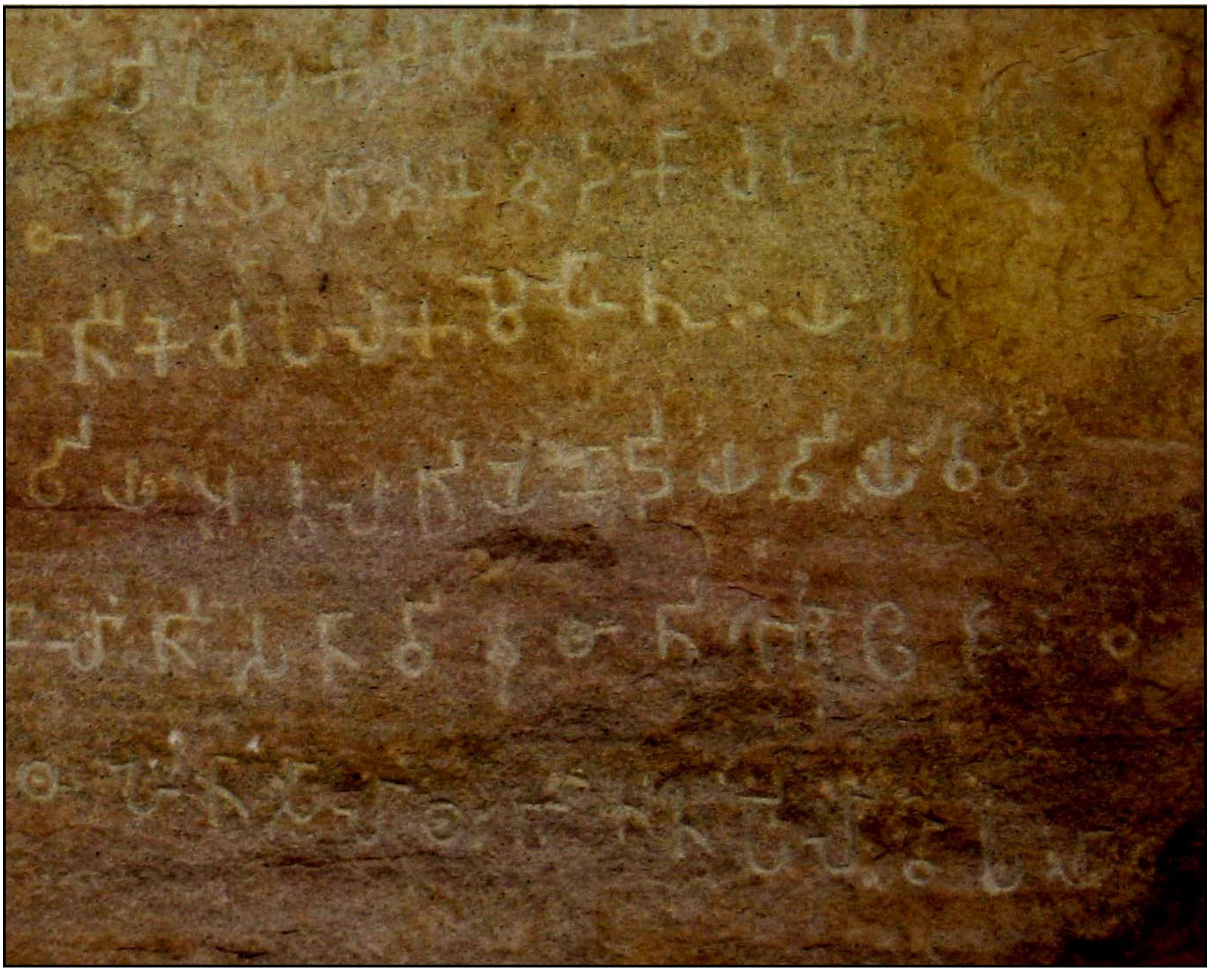
More recently, the inscription in Asokan Brahmi has been reported in greater detail in *Sanatan* (17: 3-5) on the basis of press statement released by the Jnana-Pravaha, an institution dedicated to art and Indology in Varanasi. According to the press release by



Asokan inscription (?) (source: Vibha Tripathi et al., 2008)



Close up of Asokan inscription (?)  (source: Vibha Tripathi et al., 2008)



Jnana-Pravaha, the inscription has been deciphered as the First Minor Rock-Edict which has also been found at 18 other sites including the present one with some similarity and some difference.

Our observation about this supposed inscription of Asoka is somewhat different than the one made with reference to Jnana Pravaha. First of all the location of inscription is near the village Basaha situated in district Kaimur, Bihar (not in Ghurhupur). Ghurhupur is situated in Chandauli district of Uttar Pradesh. The village of Basaha lies in Kaimur district of Bihar. It is approximately two kilometer east of village Ghurhupur from where rock-shelters have been earlier reported by Prabhakar Upadhyay. We had extensively explored the hill several times with the help of large number of local guides and villagers for more rock-paintings, potsherds, inscriptions and other antiquities. It is quite strange how this inscription engraved in a very open spot remained unnoticed by so many people. Local villagers who frequently visited these shelters from their childhood were also totally ignorant with this edict.

Close up of hill showing location of rock-shelter and inscription (source : Vibha Tripathi et al., 2008)

General view of hill on which inscription is found (source : Vibha Tripathi et al., 2008)

A first hand examination of the said inscription shows that in contrast to other inscriptions of Asoka the letters are very shallow. It is approximately 2 mm. deep or even less than that at a few spots.

A close look at the inscription clearly shows that the colour of the rock on which the inscription is carved is quite different from its adjacent surface colour which suggests it was recently engraved. In fact the inscribed surface itself is relatively new than the adjacent surface of the hill.

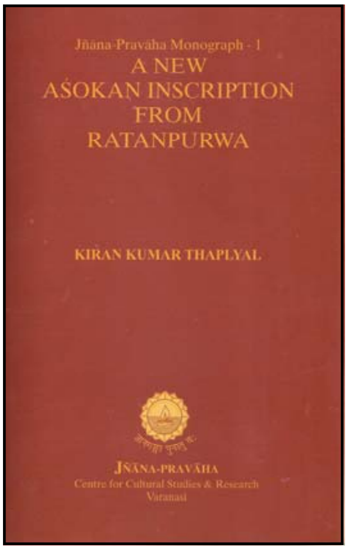
It is a wonder that there is no patination or weathering of rocks in the inscribed area even after a lapse of several centuries. The Asokan Edict is inscribed on the rock-surface on the eastern end of the hill outside a cave. It is widely open to sun, rain and wind action. Considering the weathering rate and softness of the sandstone it is very difficult to explain how it is so preserved during these 23 centuries. This Minor Rock Edict is very similar in content with that one found at Sasaram, approximately 70 km. east of this place. Ahiraura Rock Edict of Asoka is only 25 km. west of this hill. Many letters of both the inscriptions are undecipherable because of rock weathering whereas inscribed on the same kind of rock; Basaha inscription is fresh and intact. The nature of inscription especially the freshness of letters make one think twice about the genuineness of the inscription. A deeper examination of this inscription is required before accepting this as a genuine Asokan inscription.

***- Vibha Tripathi, Prabhakar Upadhyay and Om Prakash Kumar***

***Dept. of AIHC and Archaeology, Banaras Hindu University, Varanasi***

**PUBLICATIONS**

# A New Asokan Inscription from Ratanpurwa




*Jnana-Pravaha,* Centre for Cultural Studies and Research, Varanasi recently brought out their first Monograph by Kiran Kumar Thaplyal, entitled *A New Asokan Inscription from Ratanpurwa*. This monograph presents a firsthand account of the recently discovered inscription and its decipherment. The monograph was released on 7th February 2009, on the occasion of the lecture programmed to be delivered in the memory of Prof. R.C. Sharma, who was the honorary director (*Acharya*) of the *Jnana-Pravaha* and is dedicated to him.

Officially this inscription was reported on 15th January 2009. It is a marked discovery, which has been added, in the previously discovered 17 Asokan minor rock-edicts. As described, the site where this inscription is found is first considered about 60 km. away from Varanasi via Mughal Sarai Pass and Chakia. After Chakia, via Saidupur, a small village named Ghurhupur is the place from where at a walking distance one encounters some natural caves on the hillocks of Kaimur range. But the cave where this inscription is found falls in the periphery of village Ratanpurwa in district Bhabua, Bihar. These caves are dated back to the pre-historic era as some primitive rock-paintings were discovered here. After that the caves seemed to be occupied by the Buddhist monks during the reign of Emperor Asoka (270-30 BCE) and further continued to be occupied up till Gupta and post-Gupta period.

This recently discovered inscription is traced on the outer wall of a natural cave. It contains nine lines of typical Asokan Brahmi script. First line of the inscription occurs at the height of 2.95 meter from the floor and the ninth line at 2.39 meter. The floor in front of the wall is flat, roughly about 4.27 meter in width and a few meter larger in length. It was probably made to accommodate about 20 people at a time such that they could sit and read the message of their Emperor. It has a natural projecting rock cover at the height of 7 meter which up till now protected the inscription from rain and sun.

As far as the language is concerned, the Magadhi form of Prakrit is used in this inscription.

This style of language appeared in some other earlier found inscriptions of the Asokan era as well. It was largely prevalent in the Gangetic plain, Kalinga and, to a great extent, at Kalsi.

1. (i) देवानांपिये हेवं आह (ii) अधिकानि अढातियानि सवछलानि अं उपासके सुमि
2. (iii) न चु बाढं पलकंते (iv) सवछले साधिके अं मम संघे उपयीते (v) एतेन च अंतलेन
3. जंबुदीपसि अमिसं देव संत मुनिसा मिसंदेव कटा (vi) पलकमस इयं फले
4. (vii) नो च इयं महतता व चकिये पावतवे खुदकेन पि पलकममीनेना विपुले
5. पि सुअगे चकिये आलाधयितवे (viii) से एताये अठाये इयं सावने खुदका च उडा-
6. ला चा पलकमंतु अंता पि च जानंतु चिलठितीके च पलकमे होतु (ix) इयं च अ-
7. ठे वढिसति विपुलं पि च वढिसति दियढियं अवलधियेना दियढियं वढि-
8. [स]ति (x) इयं च सावने विवुथेन (xi) दुवे सपंनालाति-सता विवुथा ति **200 50 6** (xii) इमं
9. [च अठं*] पवतेसु लिखापयाथा (xiii) यदि वा अथि हेता सिलाथंभा ततपि लिखापयाथा ति

Looking at the letters, most of these are uniformly engraved and carefully cut on a smooth chiseled surface of 100 x 46 cm. Letters in the first five lines are engraved close in comparison to the rest of the lines. According to author 'the gap between the letters from line 6 onwards increased as to avoid sizeable blank space at the end.'

Content of the inscription says it has been two and a half year since Emperor Asoka became a Buddhist worshipper. More than a year has passed since his association with the *Samgha* (congregation of Buddhist monks). It further states that people of Asoka's empire mingled with god as he made his people virtuous. He said that leading a virtuous life leads to heaven and not only men of high rank can attain it but even those of low ranks can achieve the same. This can be achieved by adopting *Dhamma*, as Asoka has achieved. He added that this message should reach to everyone (to low as well as high ranked persons) and even to those who are outside the territory. He further added that the effect of his zealous effort will increase and last long. He notifies that the declaration was made by him during his tour where 256 days have already been passed. He instructs that the inscription should be engraved on rocks and on pillars

अनुवाद

(i) देवानंप्रिय (देवताओं का प्यारा) ऐसा कहता है

(ii) ढाई साल से अधिक समय से मैं [बौद्ध] उपासक रहा हूं

(iii) [लेकिन मैंने] अधिक पराक्रम नहीं किया

(iv) एक वर्ष से अधिक हुआ कि मैंने संघ से संपर्क स्थापित किया

(v) जो मनुष्य जम्बूद्वीप (भारत) में इस समय तक देवताओं से नहीं जुड़े थे उन्हें देवताओं से जोड़ दिया गया

(vi) यह पराक्रम का ही फल है

(vii) यह केवल महान् पद वालों द्वारा ही प्राप्त करना शक्य नहीं है अपितु लघु पद वाले भी पराक्रम करने से विपुल स्वर्ग को प्राप्त कर सकते हैं

(viii) इस प्रयोजन के लिए यह घोषणा की गई है कि छोटे पद वाले और बड़े पद वाले [दोनों ही] पराक्रम करें, सीमावर्ती लोग भी [इसके बारे में] जानें और यह पराक्रम चिरस्थायी हो

(ix) और इस प्रयोजन में वृद्धि होगी, विपुल वृद्धि होगी, डेढ़ गुना, कम से कम डेढ़ गुना वृद्धि होगी

(x) यह घोषणा मैंने यात्रा के दौरान की है

(xi) [इस समय] मुझे यात्रा करते दो सौ छप्पन **200 50 6 (256)** रात्रि (अर्थात् दिन) बीत चुके हैं

(xii) इस प्रयोजन को शिलाओं पर लिखवायें

(xiii) यदि यहां (अर्थात् मेरे साम्राज्य में) शिला-स्तम्भ हों तो उनपर भी लिखवायें

if they are available.

It is believed that Asoka decided to make all his proclamations after the Kalinga war which happened after eight years of his coronation. He adopted Buddhism after that war and promised not to make any invasion by force. Then after ten years of his coronation he visited Bodhgaya which is recorded in rock-edict VIII. It is in his eleventh year of coronation when he set out on tour and after 256 days he propagated this minor rock edict.

This inscription is somewhat similar to the earlier found Sahasram's rock-edicts as few words and letters were found to be related. Prof. Thaplyal has mentioned a few letters and words found in Sahasram version which are similar to this Ratanpurwa inscription. For example in line 2 of Sahasram version words *amisam deva* is found which can be seen in line 3 of Ratanpurwa version. Other word *palakame* in line 6 of Ratanpurwa inscription is similar to the Sahasram inscription. Likewise there are more alike words brought to light by Prof. Thaplyal. The discovery of Ratanpurwa edict cleared up some assumed words which were damaged in Sahasram version. As in Sahasram version, after letter *ya* in line 7 inscription was damaged which D.C. Sircar earlier restored as *ya [ta]* as per Panguraria inscription. But in the Ratanpurwa inscription it is read as *yadi*. As Sahasram version is the same copy of Ratanpurwa thus it is undoubtedly *yadi*. It changes the meaning slightly this way, in case of *yata* it means the existence of the pillar is certain while in case of *yadi* it would mean the pillar could be or could not be there.

The discovery of this rock edict supports the idea that there could be possibly more such edicts in secluded areas of this region, which were exclusively engraved for the Buddhist monks. As emphasized by Prof. K.K. Thaplyal, possibly in the same proximity where minor rock edicts are found there could be Buddhist monasteries, which are yet to be discovered.

This monograph includes all the significant facets of the inscription. It comprises pictures of the inscription and its translation in Hindi as well as in English. It has been studied keeping in mind the 17 earlier found minor rock-edicts. Similarity in words and letters with the Sahasram inscription makes Ratanpurwa inscription noteworthy. Selected references make this work more useful.

***- Aprajita Sharma***
***New Delhi***

**SEMINAR / CONFERENCE**

# National Seminar on History and Archaeology of Northern Madhya Pradesh, Gwalior, March 2009

School of Study in Ancient Indian History, Culture and Archaeology, Jiwaji University and Upadhyay Muni Sri Gyan Sagar Jain Shodh Sansthan, Gwalior would be organizing two day national seminar on *History and Archaeology of Northern Madhya Pradesh* on 20-21 March 2009 at Gwalior. Scholars are invited to participate in the seminar and present their research papers on political, geographic, dynastic and cultural history, prehistory, sculptures, architecture, epigraphy, manuscripts, paintings, religion, philosophy, etc. For participation and further details please contact Dr R.A. Sharma sharmara@rediffmail.com and Dr Navneet Kumar Jain dr_navneetjain@rediffmail.com

**LECTURES**

# Shri M.N. Deshpande Memorial Lecture

The Indian Archaeological Society organised Shri M.N. Deshpande Memorial Lecture on 14 February 2009. On this occasion Prof. M.K. Dhavalikar, former Director, Deccan College, Pune recalled the "Contributions of Shri M.N. Deshpande as an Archaeologist". As a close associate of Shri Deshpande he unravelled many unknown facets of this doyen of Indian archaeology, along with his major contributions in this field. The memorial lecture "To Restore or Not To Restore: Need For a National Policy" was delivered by renowned conservation expert Dr O.P. Agrawal, Director General, Indian Council for Conservation Institute, Lucknow. In his illustrated lecture he discussed various examples of restoration and conservation works done in West where important building had suffered much destruction during World Wars. He posed vital question as to what should be the policy in India towards the monuments, particularly, keeping in view our responsibilities towards the coming generations. He invited scholars for a serious debate and several scholars participated in discussion and expressed their opinion. The broad consensus was that the policy would differ from object to object. While scientific restoration may be a need in some cases, some sort of distinctive line has to be drawn to tell the people as to what is original and what has been restored.

***- Mukta Raut Dey***
***Indian Archaeological Society, New Delhi***

CONFERENCE REPORT

# Seminar on Culture, Archaeology and Museology, Jaipur

Two day National Seminar on Culture, Archaeology and Museology was organized by the Jaipur Circle of the Archaeological Survey of India on 21-22 February 2009 at Jawahar Kala Kendra, Jaipur. The seminar was attended by eminent archaeologists and scholars from Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, Delhi, Himacal Pradesh, Haryana, Uttrakhand and other parts of the country.

The main issue of discussion was the protection, preservation, conservation and management of cultural heritage of India and emerging tourism opportunities to the ancient monuments with special reference to the archaeology of Rajasthan. Some presentations were also made to highlight the important excavations carried out in the last decade.

Other subjects like, site museums and organizing exhibitions of art and archaeological objects abroad were also discussed in detail. T.J. Alone expressed need of many such seminars to create awareness among public in general and particularly among school children.

***- Atiq R. Siddiqui***
***Archaeological Survey of India, New Delhi***

**EXCAVATIONS**

# Excavation at Utkottai, Tamil Nadu

The Department of Archaeology, Government of Tamil Nadu has taken up a six-month excavation project at Utkottai, an ancient Chola village near Gangaikondacholapuram in Ariyalur district. The earlier excavations, conducted during 1981-1985 and later in 1991, had brought to light structures of a metropolis such as fort wall, moat and a lake for irrigation and supply of drinking water.

The current excavation is expected to throw more light on the palace and other structures of the Chola period. The excavation would determine the extent of the remains of the palace of Rajendra Chola I and throw light on art and architecture of that era. The excavation work was inaugurated, by Shri T.S. Sridhar, Principal Secretary and Commissioner to the Department of Archaeology. The focus of the excavation to be carried out by a team of 25 persons, would be documenting historical events with chronology and context.

***- S.Vasanthi***
***Archaeologist, TNSDA, Chennai***

# Excavation at Ghorakatora, Bihar

A team from the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) excavated a stupa at Ghorakatora, in Bihar's Nalanda district, about 100 km. from Patna. The huge Buddhist stupa discovered at Ghorakatora is claimed to be second in size only to the Kesaria stupa in East Champaran district. The Kesaria stupa is regarded as the largest Buddhist stupa in the world. The stupa is around 20 to 25 feet high and its circumference is 70 to 75 feet. The structure was built of random rubble dry stone masonry. The material the stupa is made of had been used to fortify an area of 32 km. near the mountain of Rajgir. The find is likely to throw more light on the ancient Nalanda University, the ancient seat of learning said to have been founded in 5th century CE.

[*source :* http://www.thaindian.com/newsportal/uncategorized/imposing-buddhist-stupa-discovered-in-bihar-lead_100152926.html]

Tendency of claiming their discoveries as the largest, the biggest and the earliest is quite prevalent among many excavators. More important than the size and antiquity in any excavation is how systematic the work is conducted and the volume of information generated. The uniqueness of finds automatically get recognition in due course of time.

## Certificate Course in Servicing and Repair of Records

New Delhi, May - June 2009

School of Archival Studies, National Archives of India has invited application for the 69th Short Term Certificate Course in *Servicing and Repair of Records*. This short course to train the candidates in arrangement, supply, restoration and up-keep of records would be held from 11th May to 20th June, 2009.

All those passed High School and having knowledge of Hindi and English can apply. Age limit for private candidates is 30 years, where as sponsored candidates up to 50 years can apply. Relaxation in age for the reserved categories is applicable as per Government norms. Registration fee is Rs.100 and course fee Rs. 300.

Further details can be obtained and application along with attested copies of educational qualification and fee can be sent to the Director General, National Archives of India, Janpath, New Delhi-110001 by 2 April 2009.

## Safeguarding Sound and Image Collections (SOIMA 2009)

New Delhi, November - December 2009

National Research Laboratory for Conservation of Cultural Property (NRLC), Lucknow in collaboration with other national cultural institutions in India, ICCROM (International Centre for the Study of the Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property) has announced a course on Safeguarding Sound and Image Collections (SOIMA 2009). Four weeks course would be conducted from 17 November-11 December 2009 at New Delhi, India with study visits to other Indian cities.

Sound and image records are found in diverse cultural institutions. As documents of intangible heritage and contemporary culture they are of immense value. The course will provide an overview of issues related to the preservation and access of sound and image materials e.g., photographs, films, video and audiotapes, and digital materials.

Course topics will include: current knowledge and practices for documenting and

cataloguing, media handling and storage, risk assessment of collections, emergency preparedness and response, criteria and technologies for migration and reformatting, planning preservation projects, outsourcing options, digital preservation and management. Other issues such as curating and access, copyright laws, legal deposit, and institutional and national preservation policies will be discussed in context with participants' working realities. Adaptation to technological changes and related cost- effective preservation strategies will form a key component of the course.

The course will interest archivists, collection managers, conservators, curators and librarians in charge of preserving collections in various cultural institutions. Preference will be given to people actively involved in teaching and advising. A maximum of 22 participants will be selected.

The course would be conducted in English and course fee is 900€. Participants will be responsible for their travel, accommodation and living expenses during the course. Participants should plan for a minimum total allowance of US$ 1500.

The course would be conducted with the cooperation of - American Institute of Indian Studies, India; Centre de Recherche sur la Conservation des Collections, (CRCC), France; International Association of Sound and Audiovisual Archives (IASA); Masters Degree Program in Moving Image Archiving and Preservation, New York University, USA; and Thomson Foundation of Film and TV Heritage, France.

Application form and further details can be obtained from http://www.iccrom.org/eng/01train_en/forms_en/applfrm_en.doc and can be sent to collections@iccrom.org by 20 April 2009.

## INVITATION

The Indian Archaeological Society, Qutb Institutional Area, New Delhi would be organising

March 18 **Prof. B. R. Grover Memorial Lecture**
"Abul Fazl's Theory of State Building and the Notion of Sulhi Kull: Philanthropic Justification of Akbar's Imperialism"
by Prof. A.R. Khan, Shimla

March 21 **Dr Y.D. Sharma Memorial Lecture**
"People's Archaeology and Archaeology for the People"
by Prof. K.M. Shrimali, Delhi

## COMMENTS

# Historic Scenes at Khajuraho

Here are excerpts from my illustrated lecture to mass communication students in Mumbai. It is relevant to what was proposed about sculptures at Khajuraho in *Sanatan* 17 and 19.

History can be written as distinct from a series of historical episodes for the thinkers but for the masses, episodes were the beacons in the vast ocean of history. There are two distinct levels of faith, one for the thinkers and one for the common man. Food for thought for thinkers is all over the temple within and without; for the common man, a little of the faith mixed with a lot of stories is essential. In terms of journalism, *jagati* of the temple is the 'page three' of the 'newspaper'; of interest to the common man. In a society bound by the *varna* system, *jagati* could be 'read' by anybody - even those without access to the sanctum. Hence what is portrayed there would be definitely what the rulers wanted their '*aam janata*' (subjects) to read and tell their grandchildren about (oral history). Whatever is important to the dynasty would be portrayed on the *jagati* panels for the masses.

The Vaikuntha image originally installed in the Lakshmana temple was a war trophy with a history. Originally, king of Bhota gave it to Sahi king of Kira; from him, it was acquired by Herambapala, the Pratihara king; his son Hayapati Devapala was defeated by Yashovarman Chandela and the image was brought to Khajuraho as a war trophy. This feat would definitely be immortalized in stone, both as an inscription and as a visual for the illiterate masses.

It could not have been a stone image, probably a precious metal image which could withstand the rigours of a long journey. Its journey to Khajuraho and the unfinished story of Yashovarman would appeal to the masses and perhaps that is what is portrayed in these panels. In this panel, something is being carried in procession by a horse back rider. The guards at the head of the procession are all carrying a dagger in their waistband. This would be true of a ceremonial guard for the God who was himself portrayed with such a dagger in his waist-band.

The construction of the Lakshmana temple was started by Yashovarman who died before the temple was completed and could be consecrated; this was done by Dhanga, Yashovarman's son. A panel fixed in the *jagati*, could be the portrayal of the ailing king Yashovarman brought to the Lakshmana temple for a last look when his end was imminent? In that panel, he is not lying on a bed in a palace - it is sagging in the middle and looks like a palanquin.

***- K.D. Kanitkar, Mumbai***

## Excavation at Ambari, Guwahati

I found this in the last issue - "pottery and rouletted Roman wares. All these indicate the link of the site with China and Roman trade. The excavation provided evidence of human activities at the site between 7th - 8th century CE". Is there not some problem between the date and Roman rouletted? And with regard to the China trade route maybe excavators could consult the Kia Tan land route linking South China through Burma-Assam.

***Lotika Varadarajan, New Delhi***

## Traditional Acoustics System - A Discovery

Last issue was rich with information. It is nice that you have covered modern buildings also. The inverted pitchers embedded in the ceiling of Saharanpur haveli may also be an insulating devise from the scorching sun. Since ASI looks after the buildings of ancient and medieval period, some more space should be given to the buildings of these periods. Earlier it gave an impression that *Sanatan* is interested only in ancient architecture and archaeology.

You have done a nice job by highlighting the residential heritage buildings. In Burhanpur and other cities of Malwa, there are a number of residential heritage buildings which are gradually vanishing. Besides their architecture, they are important for their intricate wooden carvings. ASI may think over their preservation with the help of their owners.

***Suresh Mishra, Bhopal***

## Birthplace of Buddha near Bhubneswar in Orissa

First of all thanks to you to bring the issue of all scholars regarding Buddha's birth place at Kapileswar in Orissa, and thanks Dr Mani for his valuable comment. Please try to stop this nonsense controversy. As a citizen of this country we request all the members of *Sanatan* and others, please protect our golden heritage. Try to concentrate on awareness and spread it to all.

***Banani Bhattacharya, Kolkata***

## In Hindi

I enjoyed *Sanatan*. Thanks for the idea and contents. You can also do like this in Hindi with cooperation from many friends. Salutations to Professor Dani. I knew this sad news only from *Sanatan*.

***Shekhar Pathak, New Delhi***

## Notes for Contributors

*Sanatan* has become one of the fastest medium to share information on recent researches and expert views with a large number of professionals in related fields. Time to time we have informed our members about the contributions to *Sanatan*. With every issue our members are increasing and we keep getting communications in this regard.

*Sanatan* is an OPEN ACADEMIC FORUM where one can share any news or views which one feels would be of use to people in the field or researchers in allied subjects. You may send information on diverse subjects and in various formats. They may include —

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| Research articles | Short notes on recent discoveries |
| Reinterpretations | Important publications |
| Comments on vital issues | Views and photographs |
| News of general interest | Information on seminar and conferences |
| Reports on academic events | Invitation for contributing papers, etc. |

It attempts to have frequent exchange of information among all those working in related fields for their benefit and in turn for the development of disciplines. All the members are therefore requested to keep sending their contributions for inclusion in bulletin and the annual issue.

**Disclaimer** – *Sanatan,* is an interactive group of professionals for academic pursuits. It is an independent group with no affiliation with any institution or organization, what so ever, in any manner. The views offered by the members are their own and shared here with intend to help colleagues working in related fields. All efforts are solely aimed to preservation of culture and heritage. Material offered here can be used by all for development of the discipline with due acknowledgement.

**Send your views, information, materials to sanatan08082008@gmail.com for sharing.**